



Teaching Writing in Context  
The Correction Lesson

**Rationale:** Providing students with extended commentary on essays does little to improve student writing ability. Even if students *do* read the comments, they do not reread the essay they wrote, thus the comments do not serve as formative feedback. If students are to use teacher feedback to improve thinking and writing ability, the writing process must be explicitly modeled within the context of that assignment.

### Before the Lesson

1. While grading papers, on a separate sheet of paper, make notes of the most common errors in (1) content of the writing, (2) the style of the writing, and (3) the mechanics of the writing.
2. Choose a B/C paper which exemplifies the most common errors and make copies for all students.

### The Lesson

1. Review the rubric with students.
2. Pass out copies of the sample paper to the students and give them ten minutes to evaluate it. Project a copy of the paper on the board.
3. Solicit student responses on the positive aspects of the paper. Make sure to ask for concrete evidence from the paper and do not speak in generalities.
4. Thinking about the strength of the argument, ask students to identify the area that most needs revision. Discuss specifically what must be done to strengthen that area. Have students work silently for several minutes to revise.
5. Work together to revise and rewrite the weakest part of the paper. This is the most critical part of the lesson and your opportunity to “think the writing process aloud.”
6. Repeat steps 3-5 with a common area of stylistic or mechanical weakness.
7. Have students reflect on what they learned through this correction lesson and to articulate it in writing in their portfolio. Share.
8. Return student papers and have all students apply what they learned today to revise a section of their own papers. Students should file the correction lesson and their revised paper in their portfolio when finished.